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This paper discusses the need for and presents a model of web-accessible instruction and orientation resources to support users of archives and manuscript collections. Traditional archives orientation and user education practices, as well as web-based library instruction techniques, are reviewed to create a framework of types of information that should be provided and types of resources that best provide this information. A sample of thirty special collections departments at large research institutions are examined in depth using this framework to discover what user education resources are being implemented in the field. Applying the evaluation framework and findings, a model for web-based archives user education resources is offered, featuring content on archival orientation, intellectual access, physical access, and utilization.

Headings:

Archives--Public relations

Archives--Reference services

Archives--Technological innovations

Library orientation

Reference services--Automation

**REACHING OUT TO RESEARCHERS:
A MODEL FOR WEB-BASED USER EDUCATION FOR
ARCHIVES AND MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS**

by
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Introduction

The widespread adoption and use of the Internet has given archives and manuscript collections not only opportunities to offer research tools to remote users, but also challenges to determine the best ways to support these services. Increasing numbers of repositories are encoding their collection finding aids and mounting these digital resources on the World Wide Web. According to recent research, making finding aids accessible through the web and implementing mark-up standards like Encoded Archival Description expand the roles these finding aids perform. The digital finding aid is not only a guide to a collection, but also a searching and retrieval tool (Tibbo, Meho 2001; Gilliland-Swetland 2001). Because the finding aids are more widely accessible on the web, more people will be likely to discover them while performing standard web searches. In addition to students and scholars, members of the general public may retrieve archival finding aids while conducting personal research, but many individuals may not be familiar with these tools or know how to use them.

Before institutions began digitizing their finding aids, researchers discovered collections by consulting published research guides and union catalogs, by following citations to collections in other published works, and by word-of-mouth from colleagues. After determining where the relevant collection was housed, researchers either traveled in person to the repository to use the collection finding aids or requested to have a copy of the aid mailed or faxed to them. In either of these situations, reference archivists had the opportunity to communicate with the user before, during, and after the user worked with

the finding aid. The archivist could educate the user on what a finding aid was, how to use the finding aid to navigate the collection, and how to find other archival finding aids related to his or her area of study.

Web delivery of finding aids and their use as retrieval tools, however, does not automatically offer this archival reference component. An individual whose information need may best be met with archival materials may retrieve a finding aid from a web search without understanding what it is or how to use it. This unmediated interaction with the repository through an unfamiliar descriptive tool might well discourage many prospective archives patrons. A straightforward solution to this problem is to provide web-accessible user instruction information in conjunction with web-accessible archival finding aids.

This paper will examine the ways in which archival repositories currently are presenting user education resources on their websites, including which elements of traditional archives user instruction are being transferred into web-based resources and which, if any, additional resources are being offered. First, a brief analysis of conventional archives reference services will be provided to determine what types of information could be included in a digital user education resource. Then, web-based user education resources that have been implemented in libraries will be considered to discover if any library user instruction techniques could be applied to archival tools.

Following the literature review, the research methodology of the study will be described in detail, including the sampling frame, the sample size, definitions of concepts used in analysis, and the system of evaluation of the web resources. Then, the findings of the website survey will be presented, summarizing the current practices of the archival

institutions examined in the study, as well as highlighting some of the methods that are not widely used in the field.

Using the information collected in the study and the sources consulted in the literature review, a model of practical recommendations for optimal web-based archival user orientation resources will be proposed. Adding electronic user education resources to complement web-based finding aids is a necessary step in ensuring the widespread use of archival collections in the digital age.

Literature Review

Traditional Archives User Education

Most archives and manuscript collections offer traditional user orientation and reference services. During typical reference interviews, the archivist usually explains the general research guidelines for the institution or collection and helps the user understand how to find information using finding aids or catalogues specific to the institution. The interview is also a way for the archivist to ascertain the researcher's information needs, which helps the archivist recommend particular collections within the repository that may contain useful materials for the researcher. This section of the paper will summarize the most important components of the orientation and reference interview and will examine whether these components can be transferred into a web-based environment.

Until recently, not much emphasis was placed upon reference services in archival settings. In fact, "the term reference was not found in the titles of any articles in *American Archivist* between 1938 and 1950" (Whalen, 1985). Because archivists were trying to manage increasing amounts of paper and organizational records, reference

services were not the highest priority. Archivists were more concerned with description, preservation, organization, and classification of records.

Although it was not emphasized initially, archives reference service is extremely important to the successful use of archival materials. As Chalou points out, “Reference work provides users with access to the documentation of historical activity” (1984). Such access is frequently neither easy nor self-evident. Archives users are much more dependent upon archives staff than users of libraries (Tissing, 1984). It is usually more difficult for an archives user to orient him- or herself to the repository. This is because there exists no universal classification system for archival collections and because most repositories maintain closed stacks for material storage and security. As a result, user self-service in archives is virtually non-existent. Archives users must interact with user-service staff in order to find and retrieve the records they need. Also, many people probably are more familiar with the ways in which circulating libraries meet the needs of their users, simply because they lack experience in using archival collections, but may have used libraries since they were children. Therefore, “enabling the researcher to use archival records effectively and efficiently is the central tenet of the modern archivist’s mission” (Cox, 1992).

High-quality reference service is made up of three essential elements: the researcher, the reference archivist, and the records (Chalou, 1984). In an ideal situation, these three elements come together in a sort of “convergence,” meaning that the researcher and reference archivist work together to determine which records will be of interest to the researcher. The pertinent records are retrieved for the user, and the researcher’s information needs are met. In order for such a convergence to happen, each

of the three elements must be optimized. The records must be preserved properly, arranged, and housed, and finding aids and inventories must be created so that the user can find records quickly and effectively. Reference staff must be receptive to user needs and able to locate records to meet the user's research goals. Researchers must understand how to use the archives and the finding aids to support their research.

Archives managers do have control of the organization and level of access they provide to their records and the level of service reference archivists offer to users. They do not, however, have control of how much knowledge or experience in the use of archival resources their researchers have before they arrive. Therefore, an integral part of providing high-quality reference service is the orientation interview. In fact, the main problems researchers have in finding and utilizing archival records is due to a lack of orientation to archival research tools and use of materials (Whalen, 1985). In his research on user studies at the National Archives and Records Administration, Conway (1994) identifies user education and training as an important aspect of user service that requires further research:

The user study demonstrated that a significant portion of researchers, on a continuing basis, lack experience with primary research methodologies in general and with specific agency procedures. To assist users in making efficient use of the holdings without significant direct assistance, practical research should be undertaken to determine the most effective mechanisms and procedures for compensating for inexperience.

The archives orientation interview is made up of two critical components. First, the archivist should explain the basic information a researcher would need to know when using records in that particular repository. This information would include reading room procedures, reproduction policies, records organization, and a brief orientation to using and understanding finding aids. Second, the archivist should help the researcher define

his or her research objectives, determine the scope and depth of the research, and recommend archival resources for the researcher to utilize.

According to an archives reference study conducted by Robert Tissing (1984), most reference archivists surveyed did not use a checklist or guide for conducting the reference interview. Using the information collected in a survey, Tissing compiled a checklist of topics to cover during the archival orientation interview (see Appendix A). This checklist provides a simple outline of the topics that should be covered in an archival reference orientation interview. The information included in this checklist will serve as a framework for the archival website content analysis provided in this paper.

The other goal of the reference interview is to understand the user's needs and identify records that will meet those needs. Research in archives follows a needs-oriented rather than question-oriented model (Cox, 1992). The face-to-face interview allows the reference archivist to ask questions that will help the user communicate the research needs, the scope and depth of inquiry, and the length of time he or she is able to devote to the research (Chalou, 1984). Using this information, the archivist may suggest collections containing material pertinent to the researcher's goals.

In the traditional model, resource identification relied heavily on the memory of the archivist (Whalen, 1985). The belief was that the "most valuable finding aid is the reference person, not a prepared guide, index or inventory" (Chalou, 1984). The reference archivist had to be "omniscient," knowing everything about every collection within the repository, and, therefore, able to recommend all of the relevant collections to any particular researcher (Pugh, 1984).

Realistically, the archivist will not know everything about every collection, especially if he or she personally did not process the collections. Many archival finding aids describe materials according to their creation and reflect the organization of the institution that created them (Whalen, 1985). Subject retrieval can be difficult when records are organized in accordance with the principles of provenance and original order. Archival materials are unique and activity-centered, and they are not classified like library materials (Pugh, 1984).

In order to remove some of the reliance on the archivist's memory, subject indexing of collections can improve the resource recommendations archivists give to their patrons. Assigning multiple subject access points to each collection can make archival resource recommendation more helpful and more meaningful. Good subject indexing allows reference archivists to rely less on their ability to memorize information about collections and more on their searching and retrieval skills when identifying relevant resources (Whalen, 1985).

The traditional orientation and reference interview provides information to both the researcher and the archivist. The researcher learns about the policies and procedures for the successful use of the resources in the archival repository. The archivist understands the researcher's needs and suggests resources for him or her to incorporate into research. In a web-based environment, similar types of information must be exchanged, but largely without any face-to-face contact. In order to determine how to translate the user orientation and education information communicated in the reference interview into an Internet-compatible format, user orientation resources employed by

libraries will be studied. Some of the strategies for user education developed for library patrons may also be suitable in an archives environment.

Library Internet Instruction Initiatives

In recent years, libraries have employed web-based user education tools to complement or replace traditional classroom-based or face-to-face instruction. Although libraries provide quite different types of resources and services to their users compared to archives, some of the electronic user education techniques used in libraries could be modified to work in an archival setting. Different strategies developed by libraries for electronic user education will be examined here, and each will be evaluated for adaptability into an archival user education web presence.

As electronic, web-accessible library resources become available, the need for web-accessible library education increases (Vander Meer, 2000). Distance education programs work to provide library resources to users who are not located on the institutional campus. Electronic resources also make it possible for students and researchers to use library resources at home, in a dorm room, in the field, or in the office. Currently, virtual classes are taught completely online, making electronic resources a complementary component of instruction. Libraries adopt web-based user instruction as a way to meet the needs of increasing numbers of these remote library users.

Web-based library instruction also gives library educators added flexibility. Librarians can use the web to instruct users in an asynchronous environment, “without the constraints of the fifty minute, one-shot class” (Dewald, 1999). Users can choose what library skills they are interested in obtaining and can progress at their own pace.

“The hypertext environment was created to allow users to select their own paths through information” (Dewald, 1999). The interactive component of selecting and applying library information resources on the web actively engages learners, which promotes long-lasting skill retention.

Libraries employ several types of web-based tools for instruction: Frequently Asked Questions and navigational aids, customizable interfaces, tutorials, email and chat reference, and research guides and handouts (Vander Meer, 2000). Navigational aids are guides to finding specific resources both on the library’s website and within the physical library facility. For example, the University of Nebraska libraries feature a “How do I...” link that leads users to an easy-to-understand list of questions, such as “How do I find a journal article?” Each question is a link that takes the user to help screens and on-line resources related to the question.

Similarly, the University of Arizona provides a “How to Find” drop-down box that leads the user to information on using the library catalog, finding journals, and searching databases. The University of California at Santa Cruz features a “Library Starter Kit” that provides a virtual tour of the library, guides and tutorials. Though these navigational aids are extremely helpful to new library users, they are many times difficult to find on the library home page because they are buried under several layers of departmental web pages. If prominently featured on the home page or linked strategically to particular resources, navigational aids could be extremely useful in an archival setting. A possibility could be to include a “How to Use the Archives” page including links to information on different aspects of archives use.

Library web page customization allows users to modify the library web interface according to particular profiles. Users could save finding aids or research guides created by the archival repository on their personalized library desktop for ease of use. Librarians can use this customization feature to target instruction to users who are in particular classes or who have set up particular research interests in their profile. Examples of library web page customization are “My Gateway” at the University of Washington and “My Library” at North Carolina State University. Although extremely promising, customization may be difficult for some institutions to implement, because these projects require extreme amounts of computer programming and support. Interface customization may also require a high level of technical knowledge or computer literacy on the part of the researcher, which might discourage beginning computer users. Also, many archives users who are not students attending or researchers employed by the institution may not want to or be able to set up a profile. A workable option would be for a manuscript repository to offer its users digitized archives resources that could be reached through a customizable user profile, but that are not dependent upon it.

The user education method that is the current favorite of library instructors is the tutorial. Library instruction tutorials provide hands-on research exercises that teach users library skills by example. In the first tutorials, libraries digitized existing library orientation exercises, which were usually quite long and attempted to cover many library research proficiencies. Libraries have found, however, that shorter, single objective tutorials are more effective. Many tutorials are built to accompany student research projects, including the course-integrated instruction modules created at the University of Illinois at Chicago (Koenig, 2001). These course-specific tutorials are particularly

successful because they pair library instruction with a specific context of research needs, the course project (Donaldson, 1999).

A drawback to the tutorials is that they require a considerable time commitment. Many students said they probably would not use a library tutorial unless it was specifically assigned in class (Vander Meer, 2000), and the UIC instructors had to persuade their students to take the tutorial by offering them a few extra credit points (Koenig, 2001). Also, developing tutorials involves collaboration between libraries and course instructors to create context-specific resources. Tutorials may not be the best method for delivering archives user orientation information electronically because of the time commitment involved in taking the tutorial. Some potential archives users may be discouraged because the tutorial does not provide quick access to the information they need. The tutorial might, however, be a viable option for archival repositories that directly support assigned coursework.

E-mail and chat can provide library users with information tailored to their needs. The library user could email a particular research concern or difficulty to the library reference or instruction contact and could receive a reply within minutes. Chat allows a patron to communicate with a librarian while searching for information, which can help the user identify ways to improve research strategies. Although email and chat features provide ways for library users to get very specific help, they are very labor intensive on the part of the librarian. Other user instruction resources should be provided so that the email and chat provisions become a last resort if the resources provided do not address the specific question. Archives can implement email and chat capabilities, but user

education information can be standardized and disseminated in other ways more efficiently.

Handouts and guides provide step-by-step instructions on how to use library resources. Many times these are pathfinders and other library orientation documents that have been edited and digitized for web-accessibility. These guides can be focused around particular topics or particular library resources, providing context-specific information in an easy-to-read document. Users, however, need to be able to find the guides, so strategic placement of the information at the point of use is extremely important. For example, information on how to search databases should be found at the database gateway. Archives also could implement web guides to research, linked to finding aids, online exhibits, and the repository home page.

Each of the numerous types of web-based library instruction has its own primary applications. Some of the strategies would work well for archival collections, while others might not. The techniques that could work most effectively for archives also seem to be the most straightforward. Navigational aids like “How to” pages can lead the archives user to the instruction he or she needs. Research guides can provide basic information in a standardized, widely available form, and can give step-by-step instruction for conducting archival research. These resources could also direct the user to other collections within the repository or in other repositories that relate to a particular research area. Email and chat could serve as a backup to field any questions not addressed by other resources.

Methodology

The institutions included in this study were selected from the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education, 2000 edition, “Doctoral/Research Universities – Extensive.” All of the 151 institutions in this Carnegie Classification served as the sampling frame. The Carnegie website listed the public institutions first, alphabetically by state, then the private, Not-for-Profit institutions alphabetically by state. These were entered, in the order presented by the Carnegie Foundation, into a spreadsheet, and then enumerated. Using a random number table (Babbie, 2001), a random sample of thirty institutions were selected for the website evaluation (Appendix B).

For each of the institutions in the sample, I found the institutional website, then navigated to the library website, then attempted to find the web page for the manuscript department, archives department, or special collections department. Because the organization of each library is slightly different, it was difficult at times to find the manuscript collections. Some institutions have a manuscripts department, others group manuscript collections with rare books in special collections departments, and others pair manuscript collections and personal papers with the archival records of the institution. As a way to handle this disparity, I tried to identify the department where the greatest concentration of manuscript collections and personal papers were located at each institution and evaluated this department’s web resources.

Once I identified the appropriate website at each institution, I examined the types of user education resources offered by the manuscript repository. The literature I have

studied defines a number of different types of user education resources (Vander Meer, 2000). These resources can be categorized into several groups:

- **Frequently Asked Questions** are usually a page of links designed to help users locate specific resources both on the archive's website and within the physical archives facility. Each question is a link that takes the user to help screens and on-line resources related to the question.
- **Interface Customization** allows users to modify the library or archives web interface according to particular profiles. Librarians and archivists can use this customization feature to target instruction to users who are in particular classes or who have set up particular research interests in their profiles. Examples of web page customization are "My Gateway" at the University of Washington and "My Library" at North Carolina State University.
- **Tutorials** provide hands-on research exercises that teach users skills by example. These tutorials can be either lengthy or brief and can be designed to teach either general research skills or specific learning objectives. Many tutorials are course-integrated, or built to accompany student research projects.
- **Research Guides** provide step-by-step instructions on how to use specific resources. These guides can be focused around particular topics or particular archival resources, providing context-specific information in an easy-to-read document.

E-mail and chat reference was not examined in this study. Although email and chat provide a means for archives users to get individualized assistance, it is time-consuming on the part of the reference archivist. Other user instruction resources can be

provided so that email and chat provisions become a back-up if the resources provided do not address the specific question. Archives can offer email and chat provisions, but user education information can be offered quickly and easily in other formats.

After I determined what types of resources an institution provided, I utilized latent content analysis to interpret and record the types of information being communicated by these resources. The typology I utilized is based upon the “Basic Guide for the Orientation Interview” developed by Robert W. Tissing (1984). The types of information for which I searched are:

- **Definition of primary resources:** Some remote users may have little or no experience with archives or manuscript collections. This category includes information about what an archive is, what types of documents are housed in an archive, and why these are significant to research.
- **How to interpret finding aids:** Researchers unfamiliar with archival repositories may not know how to use a finding aid to navigate a research collection. Many finding aids are not equipped with explanatory texts. Resources in this category would describe the parts of the finding aid to help the researcher interpret it more effectively.
- **Reader requirements:** For security reasons, many archival repositories require users of their collections to submit an application, show one or more forms of photo identification, obtain a researcher card, or acquire a recommendation to use collections. Resources in this category should list these requirements for research.

- **Photoduplication policies:** The archives web resources in this category should mention whether photocopying is allowed or if there are photocopiers available for use in the reading room. In addition, information about photographic services, like scanning, optical character recognition, or film photography will be included in this category.
- **Copyright information:** Researchers need to know whether the resources they are using are copyrighted or in the public domain. Archival user education resources in this category explain copyright restrictions and how to seek permission to use copyrighted materials.
- **Publication guidelines:** Some archival repositories require the researcher to submit a copy of any publication referencing the materials in the collection. If the repository communicates such a requirement, it would be included in this category of web-based user education resources. Also guidance on how to cite materials in the collection will be categorized here.
- **Reading room procedures:** The method for requesting and viewing documents varies from repository to repository. Information that fits into this category includes whether documents need to be requested by the researcher in advance, what kinds of materials can be taken into the reading room with the researcher, and whether there are outlets and data ports for laptop computers.
- **Resource identification:** This information instructs the user on how to find resources pertinent to their research objectives, by describing subject indexing and how to use on-line catalogs to locate archival collections. This may also

include lists of resources related to a particular subject area, which can help researchers identify relevant collections.

As I analyzed these websites, a data collection worksheet was used to quickly record and code the information (Appendix C). For each resource type and information type, I simply checked to see if the information was present within the institution's web page. I did not evaluate whether or not I felt the information provided by the repository was helpful, just whether or not the any information in each category or of each type was presented.

Findings and Implications

At the end of the data gathering process, I totaled each of the columns, indicating the number of institutions offering the information or resource type, and I totaled the rows, signifying the number of resource or information types offered by each institution. I will describe my findings for each of these totals in detail, providing examples of some of the types of archives user education provisions.

User Education Resource Types

First, I examined the ways in which user education information is offered by each institution via their websites. The resource types that I recorded were Frequently Asked Questions pages, interface customization, tutorials, and research guides. Of all of the resource types, the most widely implemented is the research guides, with twenty-six of thirty, or 87%, of the sample institutions providing these guides. The prevalence of this type of user education information might be related to the goals of the manuscript library. If a repository's objective in creating a website is to increase access to finding aids and

other collection metadata, the library will focus a significant portion of its website to helping users find relevant collections. Some of these guides help the user understand the relationship between the manuscript collection, the finding aid, and the on-line public access catalog at the institution. A majority of these resources assist users in accessing materials by grouping collections based on particular subject areas, which can help researchers identify similar or related collections.

The other resource types I considered in the study were implemented much less frequently. Only five institutions included a Frequently Asked Questions page in the archive or manuscript website. A good example of a FAQ page in a special collections context can be found at Louisville University, <http://library.louisville.edu/uarc/faq.html>. This resource anticipates the questions a researcher may have when visiting the website and attempts to provide appropriate answers to these questions.

One institution in the sample, North Carolina State University (<http://www.lib.ncsu.edu>), offered library web interface customization. The Special Collections and University Archives departments could be accessed through this portal, but it was unclear whether any targeted user instruction resources were created to take advantage of the user-profiles created through the customized library pages. One feature that could be leveraged by the special collections departments is the “New Titles” element. As the library acquires new materials, collections, and records with content centered on a particular subject, a notification could be linked to user profiles created with this subject interest. This could be an implicit way to educate researchers about the subject areas being developed within the collection, as well as what types and formats of materials are available in the manuscript and archives departments.

No institutions in the sample provided a tutorial to instruct remote users. This may be because tutorials are complex and time-consuming to plan, create, and maintain. The instructional value of tutorials, however, may make the time and effort required to create them worthwhile. One example of an excellent archives tutorial can be found at an institution not included in the sample, Auburn University Special Collections and Archives. The tutorial is entitled “What is an Archive and How Do I Use It?” and can be found at <http://www.lib.auburn.edu/archive/user/>. Although some sections are still under construction, the main elements of the tutorial provide a wonderful overview of the processes, terminology, resources, and research methods associated with using archival collections. The tutorial also features a Frequently Asked Questions section and the taxonomy of Auburn University finding aids.

User Education Information Types

The framework of information types used in the analysis includes the definition of primary resources, information on how to use and interpret a finding aid, reader requirements, photoduplication, copyright, and publication policies, reading room procedures, and resource identification information. Repositories included in the sample each featured at least one of the information types, but none of them included all of these informational elements.

The information type that is most widely implemented is resource identification information. Twenty-five out of the thirty institutions in the sample provided resource identification information for remote users. Resource identification information is most often provided by the research guide format. The prevalence of this information across

many institutional websites also probably is related to the goals of the repository in creating a website. If the library's goal is to increase access to the collections held by the library, then the resources and information offered by the site will be targeted toward helping researchers use tools to gain access to collections. In addition to instructing researchers in the use of tools like the on-line catalog, some archival repositories synthesize their own tools for researchers, such as subject-focused research guides to the collections held within the repository. Examples of both kinds of resource identification information can be found at the Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Manuscripts Department. Information on finding resources in catalogs is provided at <http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/msshhelp.html> and research guides to the collections are offered at <http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/finding.html>.

The next information type in terms of frequency of implementation is photoduplication information or policies. Of the thirty institutions examined, twenty-one provided some information about whether materials could be photocopied, photographed, microfilmed or duplicated digitally. While many institutions in the sample included photoduplication information on their websites, the level of information provided varied widely. Some repositories included a very brief sentence or two indicating that photocopying provisions were available, or that photoduplication of archival materials in the repository was at the discretion of the archivist. Others included several paragraphs about the various photoduplication methods available to researchers, and some even included fee schedules for these services. An example of detailed photoduplication information can be found at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Institute Archives and Special Collections, <http://libraries.mit.edu/archives/research/reproduction.html>. For

ease of use, this content is organized into three main headings, “Policies,” “Procedures,” and “Payment.”

Reader requirements, such as presenting photographic or other kinds of identification, confirming institutional affiliation, or completion of a registration form, are sometimes included on repository websites. Of the thirty institutions examined, nineteen, or 64%, included some information of this type on their websites. Columbia University’s Rare Book and Manuscript Library offers a clear example of this kind of information under the heading Use of Collections,

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/rare/about.html#Use>:

The collections of the Rare Book and Manuscript Library are available for use of Columbia University faculty and students, for those in affiliated institutions, and for readers not affiliated with Columbia who are engaged in scholarly or publication projects. Readers are asked to register at the Rare Book reference center and to provide a current photographic identification card. We recommend that new readers make appointments before coming to the library and to familiarize themselves with the hours that we are opened, the times that we retrieve materials for readers, and the location that the materials are stored. (Some materials cannot be retrieved without 24 hours advance notice.) Non-Columbia undergraduates are required to apply in advance and to provide letters from their faculty advisers explaining their need to use the manuscript and rare book collections.

This “Use of Collections” statement is provided alongside reading room procedures to further explain the process through which researchers usually must access collections.

While resource identification information helps researchers access collections intellectually, reading room procedures help researchers access collections physically. Fourteen of the thirty repositories in the sample, or almost half, include information of this type on their archives websites. The University of Chicago Special Collections Research Center, <http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/using/access/guidelines.html>,

provides a good example of reading room procedures. These guidelines explain how materials are requested, what can or cannot be taken into the collection's reading room, whether provisions are available for the use of laptops, and methods for the proper handling of the library's materials.

Only ten institutions in the sample, or roughly 30%, feature explanatory information about the primary resources in their repositories, what a manuscript collection or institutional archive contains, why the materials are there, and why the materials could be significant to researchers. Some institutions provide this information in narrative form, such as the University of Idaho Special Collections and Archives (<http://www.lib.uidaho.edu/special-collections/Primary.Sources.html>). Their guide integrates an overview of primary resources within the repository with resource identification information. In essence, this pairing of information tells the user, "this is what we have, and this is how to find it." The L. Tom Perry Special Collections Library at Brigham Young University, <http://www.lib.byu.edu/~scm/sampler/index.html>, also conveys information about the kinds of resources in its collections through the use of a "Sampler" or a group of digital images which provide a graphical representation of the variety of materials in the collection, such as manuscript pages, letters, early printed books, photographs, and ephemera. Users can scroll through the images and click to get a basic description of the item presented. This method informs the user visually and educates them by example.

A vital information type for users of collections is the copyright policy. This informs the user on the legal rights status of the materials, and it also can help to protect the institution from copyright litigation and protects the rights of the creator of the

material or other copyright holders. Of the thirty institutions examined in the study only nine include a general copyright statement or policy. Several of these institutions use the required copyright warning provided by Section 108 of the U. S. Copyright Act to address not only copyright but also photoduplication concerns on their websites:

The Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted materials.

Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specific conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship or research." If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use", that user may be liable for copyright infringement.

This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.

Other institutions also include more specific copyright and usage information, tailored to the contents of the repository. An example of this can be found at the Manuscripts Department at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill,

<http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/copy.htm>

Publication guidelines inform the researcher about how to cite materials found within the collections and if there are any policies or fees associated with scholarly or commercial publication of the materials within the collection. Five institutions in the sample provide publication guidelines on their websites. The Special Collections Department of the Honnold/Mudd Library at Claremont Graduate University (<http://voxlbris.claremont.edu/sc/access/services.html#citing>) gives an admirable example of publication guidelines on their website. Also Auburn University Special Collections and Archives uses its tutorial to give guidelines for citing many different

formats within their collection, including letters, diaries, photographs, maps and plans, and online resources: <http://www.lib.auburn.edu/archive/user/rescitation.html>.

The least implemented user education information type is finding aid interpretation information. Only one institution of the thirty in the sample offers any kind of help for users who may not understand what a finding aid is or how to use it to navigate a collection. An exceptional example of finding aid interpretation information can be found at the Auburn University Special Collections and Archives website, <http://www.lib.auburn.edu/archive/user/rescitation.html>, within the tutorial. They feature a wonderful guide to understanding the different parts of an archival finding aid, including instruction on how to use a container list to find materials within a collection

While each institution offered at least one type of user education resource and at least one type of user education information, none of the archives or manuscript repositories offered all of them. The next section of the paper examines some possible reasons for the findings of the analysis. After the results of the study are considered, a model for workable, inclusive archives user education resources for the web will be proposed.

A Model for Web-Based Archival User Education

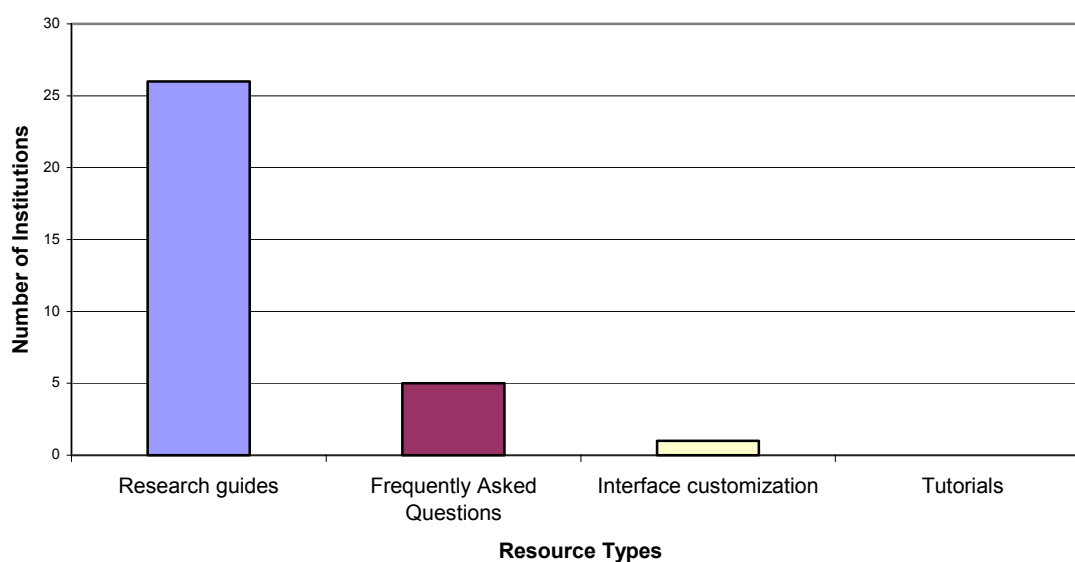
As increasing numbers of finding aids and archival materials are digitized and mounted on the web, archives reference service will also change dramatically.

Researchers might retrieve the archival materials they need on their own computers while sitting at home or in their offices (Whalen, 1985). As a result, the face-to-face interaction between reference archivists and researchers could be lost. To provide the user with the

information he or she will need, “reference services must move beyond the reference desk, reference room, and stacks” (Yakel, 2000).

The results of the study show that archives and manuscript repositories are realizing this changing nature of reference and user education provisions at their institutions. Each institution provides a subset of the user education resource types and information types considered in the study in order to serve and educate users taking advantage of electronic access to collections. Some resource types and information types were widely implemented, while others appeared in few archives websites. Why?

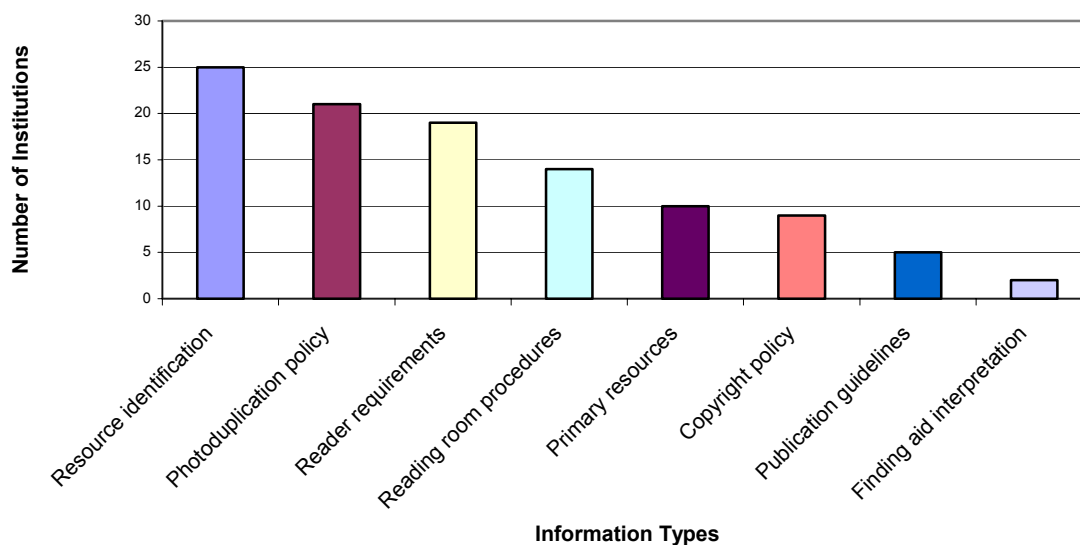
Figure 1. Resource Types Featured on Archives Websites



Based on the results of the study, most institutions provide research guides and Frequently Asked Questions, while many fewer offer tutorials or interface customization (see Figure 1). This may be because most FAQs and research guides are static documents that can be created quickly and easily. Tutorials and interface customization, on the other hand, are usually dynamic and require a higher level of expertise and a greater time commitment to create and maintain interactive sets of documents. In the

future, however, tools may be designed to make more complex user education resource types easier for archivists and librarians to design and maintain. Most of the institutions in the study featured only one resource type on their websites, usually research guides. Archives may need to consider offering more than one resource to serve different user groups who may have diverse information needs and different levels of experience in the use of archival materials.

Figure 2. Information Types Featured on Archives Websites



The information types that were most widely implemented were those that focus on access to collections, such as resource identification information, reader requirements, and reading room procedures (see Figure 2). Information about the end use of collections, such as copyright policies and publication guidelines, and information to help orient users, such as information about primary sources and finding aid interpretation, were implemented less frequently. This may be because the foremost goal of the

archivists in creating an archives website was to support and increase access to the collections held at the repository, resulting in an emphasis on access information, but not many other types of user education information. In other words, since the archivists primarily are concerned with helping users access materials, they may not be as concerned with helping researchers to put the resources to use correctly and legally. Orientation information may not be presented on many archives websites because archivists might assume that people visiting their websites will already know what primary resources are, what a finding aid is, and how to use these materials in their research. With the availability of finding aids on the Web, however, more individuals who have little or no experience in archival research will retrieve finding aids in their standard web searches.

In order to fully understand the reasons why certain information types have been included or omitted, the archivists who designed the websites should be surveyed. This is an area where further investigation could clear up any ambiguities in the data and could provide explanation for the implementation choices that have been made.

User education resources can make research in archival collections less daunting for beginners and more efficient for experienced researchers. The resource and information types scrutinized in the content analysis can be organized into a model with four main categories: Archival Orientation, Intellectual Access, Physical Access, and Utilization. Each category will be defined and strategies to implement the category within an archival repository's website will be suggested.

Archival Orientation

Archival orientation resources provide context for the user's research by explaining the nature and significance of the materials within the repository. These resources may also include basic information about what primary sources are, what formats appear within the collection, and any interesting historical notes or subject strengths of the collection. Of the information types examined in this paper, the most appropriate type for this category is the definition of primary resources.

This information can take the form of a Frequently Asked Questions page, including questions such as "What is an archive?" "What is a manuscript?" "What is a special collection?" or "Why are these materials important?" A research guide could also work to present this information under a title such as "About Manuscript Collections," "About Primary Sources," or "Help." The first one or two introductory screens in an archives tutorial also could provide this orientation and contextual information. Another resource type that could provide some of this archives orientation information is the web exhibit. Users can get an idea of the kinds of resources available in an archival repository by looking at digital images or textual examples of them. These resources could not only help researchers understand what materials are held within an archival repository, they also could increase the visibility of the archives and enhance instruction for K-12 and undergraduate students.

Intellectual Access

Intellectual access tools help the researcher find relevant materials within the repository. These are distinguished from Physical Access Resources because, at this

stage, users are locating the metadata associated with physical materials, not the physical materials themselves. Information types belonging in this category are resource identification guides, including online catalog or archival information system instructions and subject guides to the collection, as well as finding aid interpretation information. These resources help the user negotiate the various systems and metadata schemas to locate relevant information sources. These information types could be presented in a FAQ listing including questions like “How do I find materials in the archives?” or “What is a finding aid and how do I use it?” Research guides can offer step-by-step instructions on how to search and retrieve using available bibliographic tools and databases. Tutorials are especially well-suited to this kind of results-oriented learning, and could lead the user through a series of practice search exercises. Interface customization and research profiles could support subject-related research guides.

Physical Access

Physical access tools inform the user of the rules and procedures associated with requesting and viewing the collection’s materials. Information types to feature here are reader requirements and reading room or circulation procedures. Other kinds of information that could be grouped with physical access are hours of operation and location of the repository, whether there are researchers for hire, or if there are fees associated with remote research requests. This information could be presented as FAQs, such as “Once I find a relevant collection, what do I do next?” “How do I request materials?” “What happens in the reading room?” or “What if I can’t come to the library in person?” Research guides could be created under titles like “Viewing Materials” or

“Research Procedures.” Tutorials giving instruction on intellectual access could end usefully by including guidance for requesting and viewing materials within the repository.

Utilization

Utilization information deals with the end use or application of the information discovered from the materials within the repository. Utilization resources help the researcher use materials in the collection appropriately and legally. Information types that could be included in this category are photoduplication policies, copyright policies, and publication guidelines. This information can be disseminated effectively through FAQs such as “Can I make photocopies / take photographs / scan or optically recognize these materials?” “Can I publish this?” or “How do I cite this?” Research guides could be created as “Usage Policies” or “Copyright and Publication Guidelines.”

The following chart represents a matrix of the four archives user education resource categories, their definitions, associated information types, and implementation resource types.

Matrix of Archives User Education Resource Categories

	Archival Orientation	Intellectual Access	Physical Access	Utilization
Definition	Nature, significance of materials; definition of primary sources	Locating relevant materials within collection using metadata	Requesting, viewing collection materials	Policies concerning end use of archival materials
Information Types	Primary research	Resource identification; Finding aid interpretation	Reader requirements; Reading room procedures	Photoduplication, Publication, Copyright policies
Implementation	FAQ Research guide Tutorial	FAQ Research guide Tutorial Interface customization	FAQ Research guide Tutorial	FAQ Research guide

Conclusion

In summary, the two basic elements of the orientation interview can be translated into easy-to-use web-based resources. The basic information covered in the orientation could be translated into short web documents. Information from the Orientation Checklist (Tissing, 1984) that could be included are the types of materials held in the repository, what an archival collection is, what a finding aid is and how to interpret it, hours of operation, and rules and regulations of the repository such as duplication, copyright, and publication policies. All of this standard information could be presented to the user in a Frequently Asked Questions format or an “Archives User Information” research guide, or presented using tutorials or interface customization.

In order for these web documents to be effective, they need to be easy to find, easy to read, and easy to understand. The location of these help screens should be intuitive and could be context-specific. In addition to linking them to the repository’s home page, help screens could be placed at the point of use. For example, the information on how to interpret finding aids should be linked to the finding aid listing, or even linked to the style sheet applied to each of the repository’s finding aids. The web pages should be clear and user friendly (Dewald, 1999). Large blocks of text are difficult to read on screen, so they should be broken into succinct outlines. Ideas should be separated with white space, small icons, or variations in font size and face to structure the information. The goal of the organization of these documents should be to allow the user to scan the pages quickly to find the information he or she needs. Best practices for web design can be found in *Web Style Guide: Basic Principles for Creating Web Sites* by the

Yale University Center for Advanced Instructional Media

(<http://info.med.yale.edu/caim/manual/contents.html>).

In addition to giving the user general information about the repository and how to use it, the reference interview also helps the user identify resources pertinent to his or her research objectives. Just as subject indexing helps the archivist recommend more relevant collections to the user, web-based subject access to collections can help the user find research collections independently. While basic subject access cannot be a substitute for the service provided during the reference interview, subject-indexed search tools and research guides can help the researcher frame his or her inquiry within the descriptive vocabulary of the institution and arrive at a starting point for research. The goal of the user education resources implemented on an archives website should be to answer as many questions and remove as many doubts in the minds of the remote user as possible. In situations where the repository does not offer a particular service, such as photocopying, it is better to mention that these services are not available rather than leaving them unaddressed and potentially ambiguous.

Finally, to answer any questions the researcher might have that could not be addressed by the basic repository information guides or subject access provisions, email and chat reference can be utilized. Unlike the more general information resources, these services can resolve specific challenges for the user by providing information tailored to the information need. Email and chat most closely resembles the face-to-face reference orientation interview, but takes place in the virtual realm.

Providing user education information electronically can help remote users understand the methods of archival research more completely. Information can be

presented that educates the researcher about institutional policies and procedures, as well as subject information about collections contained within the repository. Frequently Asked Questions pages, research guides, tutorials, interface customization, and email and chat reference are practical techniques for disseminating this information electronically. As increasing numbers of resources are offered electronically, web-based archives education resources can provide essential support and high-quality reference services that users will require for research endeavors of the future.

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Appendix A: Basic Guide for the Orientation Interview

From: Robert W. Tissing, Jr. "The Orientation Interview in Archival Research."
American Archivist. Vol. 47, no. 2 (Spring 1984): 173-178.

Type of research:

- If your institution contains the appropriate materials for research, proceed with the interview.
- If your facility is not needed, direct the individual to other institutions.

Application form:

- Have researcher fill out the form completely.
- Check over the form for omissions.

Researcher card:

- Issue card or explain how it will be issued.
- Explain how long the card will be valid.

Hours of operation:

- Explain your normal hours of operation.
- Explain if your hours vary for weekends or holidays.

Research experience in archives:

- If none, explain your rules and regulations in detail and provide the researcher with a list of these.
- If yes, briefly emphasize those rule and regulations that apply to your facility.

Reading room procedures:

- Ask that the researcher sign the reading room register once each day and bring only essential items to the desk. Explain that other items will be locked in a cabinet, and that those items taken to the desk will be subject to search upon leaving the reading room.
- Explain that all archival materials will be brought directly to the researcher.
- Explain the procedure for requesting materials.
- Explain administrative or processing notes that may be found in the collections of papers.
- Explain the photocopying procedure.

Equipment in the reading room:

- Explain if typewriters, tape recorders, or cameras can be used.
- Explain the use of any machines in the reading room, such as microfilm readers or computer terminals.

Types of materials:

- Explain the types of materials in your holdings.
- Describe the types of finding aids and card catalogs.

Floor plan of the building:

- Describe the location of research or reading room, restrooms, and water fountains.
- Describe the location of lounge areas, food service areas, and nearby restaurants.

Grant-in-aid of research:

- If available, explain the forms and deadlines.

Final product of the researcher:

- Request a copy of the researcher's final product for the files.

Exit interview and/or questionnaire:

- Explain the purpose of the exit interview and/or the questionnaire.

Conclusion:

- Ask the researcher if he has any questions about what has been covered.
- Advise the researcher if he has any questions in future, he should ask the reading room archivist.

**Appendix B: Random Sample of Thirty Carnegie Doctoral/Research Universities –
Extensive**

University of Alabama at Birmingham
Arizona State University Main
University of California-Davis
Florida International University
Florida State University
University of South Florida
University of Idaho
Kansas State University
University of Louisville
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor
University of Minnesota-Twin Cities
University of Nevada, Reno
North Carolina State University
Kent State University Main Campus
Ohio State University Main Campus, The
Ohio University Main Campus
University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh Campus
Utah State University
West Virginia University
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
University of Wyoming
Claremont Graduate University
Catholic University of America, The
University of Chicago
Johns Hopkins University
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Columbia University in the City of New York
Fordham University
Brigham Young University
Marquette University

Appendix C: Data Collection Worksheet

Institution: _____

User education resource type(s):

Frequently Asked Questions	
Interface customization	
Tutorial	
Research guide	

User education information provided:

Definition of primary sources	
How to interpret finding aids	
Reader requirements	
Photoduplication policy	
Copyright information	
Publication guidelines	
Reading room procedures	
Resource identification guides	